

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is the purpose of zoning?**

**A:** Zoning is the practice of dividing an area into districts within which regulations and requirements uniformly govern the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings. Zoning is most often utilized to protect properties from incompatible adjacent land uses and to preserve the “character” of a community.

**Q: What are the building setbacks for my property?**

**A:** To determine setbacks, first find out what the zoning of the property is so that you can determine the setbacks for that property. Then you may refer to the City of Longview's online Code of Ordinances to look up the setbacks for that zoning designation (see link below).

**Q: How do I measure a setback?**

**A:** Setbacks are measured from a property line to the nearest point of a building or structure using a perpendicular line to the property line. Remember to always measure from a lot line and not the back of the curb or sidewalk.

**Q: What are the setbacks for a residential storage building?**

**A:** Storage buildings that are less than 160 square feet and that are in the rear 50% of the lot may have a setback of 3 feet from the rear property line and 3 feet from the side property line. Storage buildings that are greater than 160 square feet must maintain normal building setbacks. On corner lots, storage buildings must not be closer to the street than the principal structure. A building permit must be obtained before a storage building can be placed on the property.

**Q: How do I check the zoning of a piece of property?**

**A:** Call the Planning and Zoning Division at 903-237-1072. You can address your questions to the planning staff.

**Q: How do I find out what uses are allowed in each zoning district?**

**A:** In order to determine what uses are allowed in each district you will need to access the City of Longview's online Code of Ordinances (see link below). Once the page has opened, click frames. Look on the left side of the screen and at the bottom click more. At the bottom on the page, on the left side, click on Appendix A Zoning Ordinance. Then click on Article 8 Use Regulation Districts and click on the link that states click here to view Article 8 tables. These tables will show you what is allowed in each zoning district. If you have any questions, please contact the Planning and Zoning Division at 903-237-1072.

**Q: What are the requirements for erecting a fence?**

**A:** Fences shall be constructed of conventional fencing materials, including, but not limited to chain link fencing, masonry fencing or solid wood fences constructed of treated pine, cedar or redwood. Unacceptable fencing materials include, but are not limited to, plywood, railroad ties and corrugated steel sheets. Fences shall be erected on the property line and cannot be placed in the right of way. Fences on corner lots shall not obstruct the visibility triangle. Please call the Planning and Zoning Division for visibility triangle regulations. All fences over 6 foot tall require permits and the permits can be obtained through the Building Inspections Division located at 410 S. High Street.

**Q: Can I run a business from my home?**

**A:** Some businesses can be operated out of a home if they do not increase the level of activity in a neighborhood. These businesses are referred to as home occupations. A complete listing of criteria is

available through the City of Longview's online Code or Ordinances (see below) and is also available as a brochure (see below).

**Q: What are the sign regulations for the City of Longview?**

**A:** The sign regulations may be accessed through the City of Longview's online Code of Ordinances (see below). Once the page has opened, click frames. Look on the left side of the screen and at the bottom click more. Scroll down to Chapter 85 Signs and click on it. If you have any questions, please contact the Planning and Zoning Division at 903-237-1072.

**Q: Can I have a banner sign at my business?**

**A:** Yes, it is permitted in any non-residential zone. Banners must be attached in its entirety to the walls, poles, or columns of the main building or to a wood or masonry fence. They cannot be affixed to utility poles, support wires, or freestanding poles that are not part of a building.

**Q: I am opening up a new business, what type of temporary signage is allowed?**

**A:** New businesses are allowed to have one new business sign per tenant and it may be a banner sign. The sign may be a maximum fifty (50) square feet in size, may be detached and may be posted no more than ninety (90) days from the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy.

**Q: How many garage sale signs can I have?**

**A:** Garage sale signs are limited to no more than two signs, outside of the right of way. Garage sale signs are limited to six (6) square feet maximum in size in residential districts and thirty-two (32) square feet maximum in size in non-residential districts. Garage sale signs must be located on private property with the permission of all property owners. Garage sale signs in the right of way (including on utility poles and street signs) are subject to immediate removal. Garage sale signs may be erected no more than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the garage sale and must be removed prior to forty-eight (48) hours after the garage sale.

**Q: Do I need a permit to have a garage sale?**

**A:** No. City regulations state that you may not conduct more than three (3) in any twelve (12) month period and you may not conduct a garage sale for more than four (4) calendar days.

**Q: Can I temporarily sell merchandise or goods inside the City of Longview?**

**A:** Vending, selling, distributing, or displaying for sale any food, household items, clothing, furniture, novelties, toys, boats, automobiles or any other manufactured items is not allowed. Temporary outdoor vendor permits shall only be granted for the sale of seasonal items such as Christmas trees, pumpkins, roses, or produce and only for the period of time related to the season.

**Q: Who assigns a street address?**

**A:** Addresses are assigned by the City of Longview's GIS Department. Please contact Roger Moser at 903-237-2703 for additional information.

**Q: What is a zoning verification letter and how do I get one?**

**A:** A Zoning Verification Letter is a letter drafted by the Planning and Zoning Division confirming the zoning district for a tract of land within the City limits. There will be a charge for Zoning Verification Letters and may be requested by visiting the Planning and Zoning Division at 410 S. High Street. Applications are available online (see link below).

**Q: What if the zoning district does not allow my proposed use?**

**A:** You may consider rezoning the property to a district appropriate for your proposed use, or find property that already has the appropriate zoning. Contact the Planning Division to see if the request is appropriate for the immediate area.

**Q: How do I change the zoning on my property?**

**A:** An application for a rezoning request will need to be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Division.

Complete the application and return it to staff with the required information as listed. Applications must be submitted on or before the first Tuesday of the month in order for it to be placed on that month's agenda. Once the Planning Department has adequately reviewed the case, it will go before the Planning and Zoning Commission for consideration. It will then be forwarded to City Council for consideration and action. The City Council is the final approval authority for rezoning requests.

**Q: How long will the rezoning process take? How much does it cost?**

**A:** A minimum of one and one-half months is needed to complete all the different public hearings required. A list of meeting dates and deadlines is available in the Planning and Zoning Division and on the website (click link below). Consult the application regarding specific fees.

**Q: How does the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council obtain public input?**

**A:** The Planning Division will mail notice of your request to all property owners within 200 feet of the subject property ten days prior to the first public hearing. Notices are also placed in the newspaper and agendas posted publicly on the front of the Municipal Building. Those persons wishing to comment will have an opportunity to do so at the public hearings.

**Q: What does the public hearing process involve?**

**A:** The public hearing process involves appearing before the City's Planning & Zoning Commission and then the City Council. Each will hear your request, staff's report, and public input before reaching a decision on the matter. The Planning & Zoning Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council regarding approval or denial of your request. The City Council then holds a public hearing to consider the formal approval of the request.

**Q: What if the Planning & Zoning Commission denies my request?**

**A:** If the Planning & Zoning Commission recommends denial of the rezoning, you may appeal the recommendation, whereby a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of Council is required to approve your application. Such request must be made in writing to the City Planner within fifteen (15) days of the Planning & Zoning Commission recommendation. The Planning Division will in turn see that it is brought before Council for consideration.

**Q: How should I prepare for the public hearing?**

**A:** Any presentation should be brief and concise. You should describe any impacts on existing uses (both negative and positive) that would be created by the requested zoning and proposed use. If you decide to use visual aids, notify the Planning Division 24 hours prior to the meeting so that projectors, easels, etc. can be provided. Make sure your graphics can be seen from the audience. You should describe any efforts (and results of previous meetings, if any) that have been made to discuss the request with nearby property owners.

**Q: May I move a mobile home or manufactured home into the City of Longview?**

**A:** Manufactured and/or mobile-homes are required to be set within a licensed mobile/manufactured home park, established by a Specific Use Permit in an appropriate zoning district, or within a Planned Development. State inspected modular home that meets the requirements of the International Building Code may be placed in single-family zoning districts.

**Q: May I park a commercial truck in a residential area?**

**A:** In Single Family, Two Family, Multi-Family, Office and Neighborhood Services Zoning Districts, no portion of the street, alley, right-of-way, lot, garage, carport or other structure shall be used for the parking or storage of any truck, truck-trailer, farm tractor or trailer as these terms are defined in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of Article 6701d, Vernon's Annotated Civil Statutes, Vernon's Annotated Civil Status, except panel and pickup trucks not exceeding one and one-half ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ ) tons capacity.

**Q: What are variances?**

**A:** A variance is a request to appeal regulations set forth in the City's Zoning and Sign Ordinance. Variance requests typically involve issues such as setback requirements and height requirements.

Variances to requirements may be considered if the applicant proves that a hardship (other than financial) exists. Variance requests are submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department and decided upon by the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).

**Q: What is the subdivision (platting) process?**

**A:** The Subdivision Regulations apply to all property within the corporate limits of the City of Longview as well as areas outside of the corporate limits of the City, but within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of the City. The extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) is area that lies within 3.5 miles outside the city limits of the City of Longview.

**Q: What is the first step in the platting process?**

**A:** Prior to any application submittal, it is recommended that the subdivider request a meeting with the Planning and Zoning Division to discuss the procedures, policies, specifications and standards required by the City.

**Q: How do I get a plat prepared?**

**A:** You will need to hire a Registered Professional Land Surveyor. A licensed professional engineer will also be needed if public infrastructure will be required. You can locate a professional engineer or surveyor by contacting the Texas Society of Professional Engineers or the Texas Surveyor's Association or by looking in your local phone directory. The surveyor must prepare a pre-submission proposal prior to submitting a final plat. A pre-submission proposal will show all existing infrastructure, buildings or structures, driveways and other required information to ensure that the plat will comply with City regulations. Six (6) prints (24" x 36", scale 1" = 100' or equivalent) and an electronic copy should be prepared.

**Q: What is the Development Review Committee (DRC) Meeting?**

**A:** Development Review Committee is a group of representatives from the Planning and Zoning, Fire, Building Inspections, Engineering and Environmental Health. The group meets weekly to review and discuss on going projects. An applicant or developer may schedule to meet with the group for a proposed development prior to the formal submittal of development plans. These meetings are meant to provide general information regarding development standards and to help point out any major issues with a proposed development plan prior to making a formal submittal. These meetings are encouraged if a developer is new to the City of Longview, has questions about the development process, or has a complex development proposal. These meetings are available to anyone who has questions regarding a development that they're proposing to construct. To schedule a pre-development meeting, please call 903-237-1070.

**Q: When is a plat not required?**

**A:** According to the Texas Local Government Code, the platting process is required unless all of the following conditions are met:

- The division results in parcels of land that each contain an area greater than five (5) acres.
- Each parcel has access to a public street.
- No public improvement is being dedicated.

[Planning and Zoning Applications and Information](#) [1]

[Code of Ordinances - Municipal Code](#) [2]

[Planning and Zoning Brochures and Pamphlets](#) [3]

[Planning and Zoning Public Hearing Schedules](#) [4]

**Source URL:** <http://planning.longviewtexas.gov/planning-zonning-faq>

**Links:**

- [1] <http://planning.longviewtexas.gov/planning-and-zoning-applications-and-information>
- [2] <http://planning.longviewtexas.gov/code-ordinances-municipal-code>
- [3] <http://planning.longviewtexas.gov/brochures-and-pamphlets>
- [4] <http://planning.longviewtexas.gov/public-hearing-schedules>